

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENTI 02958 111253Z

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ACTION SS-30

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R 111125Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8538

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 2958

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, EAID, LA

SUBJECT: LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA TO PRESIDENT
NIXON

REF: VIENTIANE 2922

1. I RECEIVED THIS MORNING, APRIL 11, PERSONAL LETTER DATED THE
SAME DAY FOR PRESIDENT NIXON FROM PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA
PHOUMA, ON SUBJECT OF AMERICAN AID TO LAOS. I KNOW FROM OTHER
SOURCES THAT THE PRIME MINISTER DRAFTED THIS MESSAGE PERSONALLY.
WE WILL FORWARD THE SIGNED FRENCH-LANGUAGE ORIGINAL BY POUCH TO
EA/LC FOR DELIVERY TO THE WHITE HOUSE. FOLLOWING IS OUR
UNOFFICIAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF THE LETTER:

2. "MR. PRESIDENT:

"AS YOU KNOW, A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION HAS
JUST BEEN CONSTITUTED WITH THE APPROVAL OF OUR SOVEREIGN AND, I
SINCERELY BELIEVE, WITH THE APPROVAL OF ALL THE LAO PEOPLE.
THE LATTER HAVE SUFFERED TOO MUCH FROM THE WAR, IN FACT, NOT
TO ASPIRE WITH ALL THEIR HEARTS TOWARD NATIONAL RECONCILIATION
AND PERMANENT PEACE, WHICH THEY HAVE DESIRED FOR SUCH A LONG
TIME.

"WE NOW HAVE AN ENORMOUS TASK BEFORE US. IMMENSE DAMAGE HAS
BEEN DONE TO OUR KINGDOM. ENORMOUS NATURAL WEALTH HAS BEEN
DESTROYED. THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES HAVE BEEN SCATTERED, ISOLATED,
AND REDUCED TO A CONDITION OF INHUMAN NOMADIC EXISTENCE. ALL THIS
DAMAGE MUST BE REPAIRED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

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"IN THIS REGARD, WE ARE COUNTING GREATLY ON ALL OUR FRIENDS. OUR LITTLE KINGDOM NEEDS, RIGHT NOW, LARGE-SCALE AND CONCERTED AID, IN ORDER TO BUILD THE FOUNDATION OF AN ECONOMY WHICH WILL ALLOW US TO EMERGE FROM UNDERDEVELOPMENT, AND REMOVE OUR DEPENDENCE ON THE CHARITY OF OTHERS.

"WE ARE WELL AWARE IN LAOS OF THE GENEROSITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THEIR PROMPT ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES DEVASTED BY WAR. THE EXAMPLE OF THE MARSHALL PLAN FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE IS COMFORTING EVIDENCE OF THIS. SIMILARLY, WE HOPE THAT, IN REGARD TO OUR OWN CONCERNS, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA WILL CONSIDER OUR PROBLEMS AS SYMPATHETICALLY AS POSSIBLE. I KNOW MOREOVER, MR. PRESIDENT, HOW CONSCIENTIOUSLY YOU VIEW THE NEED TO HELP THE INDOCHINESE STATES LIFT THEMSELVES UP FROM THE RUINS AS SOON AS IT WILL BE POSSIBLE.

"THEREFORE, IN THIS CONTEXT, THE NEW LAO GOVERNMENT WILL BE HAPPY AND GRATEFUL FOR EVERY INITIATIVE ON YOUR PART TO PROMOTE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE KINGDOM. SUCH RECONSTRUCTION IS NOW THE BEST WAY TO STRENGTHEN THE PEACE WHICH ALL OF US WISH TO MAKE DURABLE, OPEN THE WAY TO ECONOMIC PROGRESS, AND EASE EVERYONE'S CONSCIENCE." (COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE).
WHITEHOUSE

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O. MR. SARROS.

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